

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for translating a first set of part numbers into a second set of part numbers for use in a design collaboration and supply chain management network, including

a set of client devices, wherein each client device included in said set is under the control of a user who wishes to engage in a business transaction that requires the usage of a part number;

a dedicated server remotely coupled to at least one client device included in said set of client devices, wherein said dedicated server provides a hub in said design collaboration and supply chain management network;

a database coupled to said dedicated server, wherein said database includes a set of proprietary part numbers, a set of universal part numbers and a set of associations between said proprietary part numbers and said set of universal part numbers;

a computer program coupled to said database, wherein said computer program includes instructions for translating said part numbers;

a communications network, for remotely coupling said set of client devices and said dedicated server.

2. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein each universal part number included in said set of universal part numbers is associated with one or more proprietary part numbers included in said set of proprietary numbers.

3. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as in claim 1, also including a translating module for translating one or more part numbers associated with an order into different part numbers that the recipient of a document readily understands.

4. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as in claim 3, wherein said translation module is used to prepare commercial documents.

5. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as in claim 4, wherein said apparatus also includes a management module and rule base that identifies what parties may create associations between part numbers and enter new part numbers.

6. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said part numbers are associated with the titles of people who provide a specific service.

7. (Currently amended) A method for translating a document that includes a set of proprietary part numbers over a network, including steps of:

receiving a first document including a first set of proprietary part numbers from a client workstation, wherein a user of said client workstation wishes to engage in supply chain management, design collaboration, or the purchase or sale of services or fungible goods;

translating said first set of proprietary part numbers into a set of universal part numbers;

determining availability of one or more parts associated with said set of universal part numbers;

storing in a first database a record of true ~~universal~~ part numbers and amounts of parts ordered or backordered;

translating said set of true ~~universal~~ proprietary part numbers into numbers originally provided by the user; and

generating shipping papers or electronic records using the set of proprietary part numbers originally provided by the user translated from the set of true ~~universal~~ part numbers that summarizes a transaction involving the parts.

8. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 7, wherein each of said set of universal part numbers is associated with other part numbers ~~such as~~ that may be associated with different suppliers or manufacturers.

9. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 7, wherein said steps of translating said first set of proprietary part numbers and said steps of translating said set of true ~~universal~~ part numbers are performed by a translation module that translates one or more proprietary part numbers associated with said first document into different part numbers that the recipient of said shipping papers or electronic records readily understands.

10. (Original) A method as in claim 9, wherein said translation module is used to prepare commercial documents.

11. (Previously amended) A method as in claim 7, further comprising the step of identifying what parties may create associations between part numbers or enter new part numbers.

12. (Currently amended) A memory, including a set of instructions executable by a processor, said set of instructions including instructions for

receiving a first document including a first set of proprietary part numbers from a client workstation, wherein a user of said client workstation wishes to engage in supply chain management, design collaboration, or other purchase or sale of services or fungible goods;

translating said first set of proprietary numbers into a set of universal part numbers;

determining availability of one or more parts associated with said set of universal part numbers;

storing in a first database a record of true ~~universal~~ part numbers and amounts of parts ordered or backordered;

translating said set of true ~~universal~~ proprietary part numbers into numbers originally provided by the user; and

generating shipping papers or electronic records using the set of proprietary part numbers originally provided by the user translated from the set of true ~~universal~~ part numbers that summarizes a transaction involving the parts.

13. (Currently amended) A memory as in claim 12, wherein each of said set of universal part numbers is associated with other part numbers ~~such as~~ that may be associated with different suppliers or manufacturers.

14. (Currently amended) A memory as in claim 12, wherein said instructions for translating said first set of proprietary part numbers and said instructions for translating said set of true ~~universal~~ part numbers further include a translation module that translates one or more proprietary part numbers associated with said first document into different part numbers that the recipient of said shipping papers or electronic records readily understands.

15. (Original) A memory as in claim 14, wherein said translation module is used to prepare commercial documents.

16. (Previously amended) A memory as in claim 12, wherein said instructions further include instructions for identifying what parties may create associations between part numbers or enter new part numbers.